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New York

President:	Mr. Barbalić	(Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Members:	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

The President: I should like to invite the representative of the Sudan to participate in this meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

I should also like to invite Mr. Haile Menkerios, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, and Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, Chairperson of the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan, to participate in this meeting under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. I welcome Mr. Menkerios, who is joining today's meeting by video teleconference from Khartoum. I welcome Mr. Mkapa, who is joining today's meeting by video teleconference from Juba.

I now give the floor to Mr. Menkerios.

Mr. Menkerios: Last week's peaceful conclusion of polling in the Southern Sudan referendum marked an historic milestone in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). This is a testament to the commitment of the two parties to the Agreement they signed six years ago and an illustration of their strategic decision to uphold the CPA as they approach the final and decisive stages of its implementation. I would like to take this opportunity to commend President Al-Bashir and Vice-President Kiir for the leadership and courage they displayed in taking the country along this difficult path, and call on them to continue such a partnership, which, as we have witnessed during the past few weeks, is absolutely critical to the successful completion of the peace process.

Polling, which started, as required by the CPA, on 9 January, concluded as planned on 15 January. Despite the short time frame and logistical challenges, all materials were distributed on time to the referendum centres. Registered voters in Southern Sudan, Northern Sudan and out of country were able to vote without any major problems. No significant security incident affected polling areas. Voting was disrupted only by weather conditions in Brisbane, Australia, and was extended by three days to guarantee that all registered persons could vote. I would like to take this opportunity to applaud the work of the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission, the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau, the State High Commissions and the polling centre staff, as well as all their national and international partners who have worked tirelessly for the past few months and organized a remarkable polling process.

The Southern Sudan Referendum Commission announced on 13 January that the required 60 per cent threshold of registered voters — that is, 2,359,553 voters — had been reached by the fourth day of polling, making the referendum legally valid. Subsequently, on 16 January, the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission Chairperson, Professor Khalil Ibrahim, announced that 83 per cent of registered voters had cast their ballots, a remarkable turnout.

The United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), the United Nations Development Programme and other international partners worked closely with the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission and its subsidiary bodies, providing technical assistance and guidance on all aspects of the process. United Nations air assets were heavily utilized to deliver and retrieve polling materials and to transport key referendum staff and international observers. The international community, through its generous financial contributions, made possible the timely procurement of ballots, polling kits and other materials, and helped finance the training of polling staff and referendum security officials.

Security remained calm throughout the polling period in the South except for some minor clashes between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and a rebel group in Unity state at the start of polling and some disturbances by cattle rustlers in Western Bahr el Ghazal, but none had any connection with the referendum, and the disruption these events caused to the polling process was minimal. Clashes in Abyei, where no voting was scheduled to take place, also had no direct impact on referendum security.

The referendum was closely observed and monitored by large numbers of domestic and international observers. More than 22,000 domestic observers were accredited to oversee the process, alongside approximately 600 international observers. Observers were present in the overseas centres in eight

countries. As Mr. Mkapa will undoubtedly mention in his briefing later, the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan noted in its preliminary statement that, based on its observations and those of its staff in the field, the Panel is satisfied that the process allowed the people of Southern Sudan to express their will freely. Similarly, the observer missions of the African Union (AU), the European Union, the Carter Centre, the Arab League and the Intergovernmental Authority for Development have issued statements concluding that the polling was free and fair.

The counting of ballots at each referendum centre commenced immediately after the closure of polls on 15 January. Results have been posted at each centre and are to be forwarded and aggregated at the next level between 17 and 23 January. Results from all referendum centres will be verified, approved and progressively announced. The Southern Sudan Referendum Commission will announce preliminary results for the entire referendum on 2 February. Barring any legal appeals, the final results will be declared on 7 February and, in the case of appeals, on 14 February. Senior officials of the National Congress Party in Khartoum have already announced that the referendum would most probably meet the standards necessary for its outcome to be recognized and accepted.

With regard to post-referendum negotiations, as we move into the final six months of the CPA interim period, much remains to be done. The African Union High-Level Implementation Panel on the Sudan, led by President Mbeki, is mediating the negotiations on post-referendum arrangements with the help of UNMIS, the United States and other partners. We hope that the successful completion of the Southern Sudan referendum will help to enhance confidence between the two parties and help them make the necessary compromises to find solutions to the future status of Abyei and a host of other pending issues, as well as accelerate the popular consultations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states. The parties now have the chance to launch a new stage in their relationship and to begin building a foundation for trust and cooperation.

As members of the Council are aware, the referendum for Abyei did not take place. Nonetheless, the parties remain engaged in the search for a resolution to the area's future status. The AU High-Level Implementation Panel has presented a set of proposals to the two parties, but they have not yet agreed on any of the options or presented alternatives. The talks are scheduled to resume on 27 January in Khartoum at the presidency level.

Uncertainty over Abyei continues to present a risk to peace and stability on the ground, and the Abyei area remains tense and volatile. Incidents on 7 and 8 January in different areas in the northern part of Abyei culminated in a significant confrontation between Ngok Dinka police forces and Misseriya communities on 9 January near the village of Makier Abior, approximately 13 kilometres north-west of Abyei town. Following the incidents, UNMIS was repeatedly denied access to the area and could not confirm the number of casualties, which is estimated at between 20 and 60. Soon thereafter, reprisal operations were launched by some of the affected Misseriya community members against a convoy of southern returnees while they were passing through Southern Kordofan on their way to cross the border home.

UNMIS moved quickly to prevent any escalation of violence, both through political intervention with political leaders and by directing increased patrolling on the ground. With UNMIS encouragement and participation, an intercommunal conference was quickly organized in Kadugli to address immediate concerns over the impending migration of the Misseriya, and a subsequent governmental meeting took place yesterday to address outstanding security needs in Abyei, returning internally displaced persons, Southerners living in the North and vice versa. The parties agreed to bolster security in Abyei, particularly its northern part, with an additional two battalions of joint integrated units, and to pull back the 300 Ngok Dinka policemen who had come from Wau, in the South, and had been deployed to northern Abyei posts, which triggered Misseriya reactions. They also agreed to completely disarm all communities in Abyei, to escort returnees to safe destinations, and to ensure the freedom of movement and security of migrants with their cattle through Abyei and southwards into other grazing areas in Southern Sudan.

UNMIS has increased both the size of its military deployment to Abyei and its military and civilian patrolling in the area in order to deter further attacks. Movement restrictions were placed on UNMIS patrols by both Ngok Dinka and Misseriya forces, which impeded the Mission's efforts in responding to the violence. Furthermore, incidents involving the

commandeering of United Nations vehicles by and direct threats to United Nations personnel by these armed elements reoccurred, which cannot and will not be tolerated.

These efforts to reduce tensions and prevent violence can help contain the situation. However, the continued absence of a final settlement for the future status of Abyei leaves open the possibility of further clashes between the communities on the ground. I therefore call on the parties to redouble their efforts to settle the Abyei dispute and display the same leadership and courage they have displayed regarding the Southern Sudan referendum.

Regarding Southern returnees, I welcome statements from both parties on their commitment and arrangements to protect and respect the rights of Southerners in the North and Northerners in the South, respectively. Over 1.2 million Southerners have returned since the signing of the CPA, with a recent surge since October 2010 involving approximately 160,000 Southern returnees. This process needs careful handling to avoid a humanitarian crisis. The United Nations is providing humanitarian support to the return process and stands ready to provide additional technical support as necessary. I welcome the recent decision taken by the Government of Southern Sudan to promote return and reintegration, in accordance with internationally accepted principles of voluntariness, safety and dignity.

Ahead of the referendum, the Government of Southern Sudan pursued its road map for political accommodation in the South with the signing of a ceasefire framework agreement between the SPLA and Lieutenant General George Athor. This is most welcome. The implementation of the promises made by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) during the all-party conference of October 2010 will similarly be critical to consolidating Southern stability in the post-referendum environment. UNMIS stands ready to provide support and assistance to this process and encourages the SPLM to move forward with it.

Regarding the popular consultations, the achievements of the CPA and the future of governance in Northern Sudan are also supposed to be reviewed through popular consultations in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan. Unfortunately, however, no sufficient political commitment has yet been demonstrated or clarity of objectives provided by the parties to meet the requirements of the peace process in the two states. One can hardly say that even in Blue Nile state, where elections have taken place, there is real confidence that the popular consultations will be carried out properly and lead to a solution to the inequities that led to marginalization and conflict in the past.

The popular consultations represent one of the key final benchmarks of the CPA and require both clarity and attention from the parties. Neither of them can afford to leave grievances and fears between rival communities in the two states unaddressed, and risk a resumption of hostilities in the border areas. Progress will absolutely need to be made on that front in the next six months if the gains achieved by the peace process so far are to be consolidated.

The Southern Sudan self-determination referendum is probably the single most important foundation for the future peace and stability of the Sudan and of the entire region.

The next few months will provide the basis for a transition to the post-CPA environment. As with any transition, it will be marked by a degree of uncertainty, considerable expectations and hopes for some, and fears of the new and unknown for others. Both the SPLM and the National Congress Party need to continue displaying the remarkable leadership, statesmanship and political courage they have demonstrated in the past few weeks to guide the Sudan through this difficult period.

Whatever the referendum's outcome, both Northern and Southern Sudan will remain multi-ethnic, multicultural and multireligious societies. Such diversity is always the strength of nations, never their weakness. With the conclusion of the CPA, both the North and the South will need new constitutional arrangements. This represents an important opportunity for both of them to engage relevant stakeholders and consolidate the peace and stability achieved under the CPA.

The United Nations and the rest of the international community will need to continue supporting the parties through the rest of the peace process and help to ensure that peace is maintained between them while stability and democracy are consolidated and deepened within them. The Sudan is on the eve of a new dawn, and it is going to need a heavy dose of encouragement and support from the

international community to make sure that committed implementation of the CPA signifies a final and definitive break with the past and opens a new era of prosperity and stability for all Sudanese.

The President: I thank Mr. Menkerios for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, Chair of the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan.

Mr. Mkapa: I am grateful for the opportunity to brief the Council once again on the Southern Sudan referendum. My statement will be short, since I do not have much to add to the statement that the Secretary-General's Panel issued two days ago.

During the week of polling, the Panel members and I visited referendum centres in eight states, and the Panel's staff monitored the process in all Southern states and across the North. Based on our own observations and those of our staff in the field, as well as on accounts conveyed by various interlocutors in the Sudan, I can report on behalf of the Panel that we are satisfied that the process so far has been conducted in a peaceful and transparent manner, allowing the people of Southern Sudan to express their will freely. Preliminary statements issued by international observer groups have made similar assessments of the process.

Our reports indicate that polling procedures were properly followed overall. Polling centres generally opened on time and were well staffed and stocked. Referendum staff carried out their work in accordance with established procedures, and security was maintained at all locations monitored. The referendum staff appeared to be well-trained in counting and result-aggregation procedures, including security and transparency requirements. Ballots were counted in the presence of observers and results posted at referendum centres. The Panel has so far found no evidence to suggest that there was any systematic or widespread attempt to undermine the polling process.

We are now closely following the aggregation of results. The process of transmitting the results from nearly 3,000 referendum centres to county subcommittees and state high committees, and then to Juba and Khartoum, is under way. We understand that any alleged errors or fraud will be thoroughly investigated and that any results tainted by verified cases of errors or fraud will be dealt with appropriately.

A mere three months ago, when the Panel undertook its first visit to the Sudan, the timely, orderly and smooth conduct of polling was hard to imagine. The dedication and work of the commissioners and staff of the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission and its Bureau, the registration and polling officers and the security officers involved are to be commended.

As we stated on 16 January, we would like to recognize the courage and leadership demonstrated by President Omer Al-Bashir and First Vice-President Salva Kiir Mayardit, as well their commitment to implementing a major milestone of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. In order for the outcome of the referendum to be sustainable, it is essential that a number of outstanding post-referendum issues between the parties be resolved. The Panel has urged governmental authorities and the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission to make every effort to ensure that all citizens are kept well informed of progress towards the final results. The Panel also called on the media and political forces to report on the process in a responsible manner.

Both parties have given important and unequivocal public assurances about respecting the outcome of the referendum. Leaders of both parties have also given assurances about the rights and safety of Southerners in the North and Northerners in the South. Early clarity on citizenship could ease some of the anxiety felt by those communities. The positive momentum achieved can be sustained only by further demonstration of goodwill and political commitment from both sides.

The President: I thank Mr. Mkapa for his briefing.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haile Menkerios for the support that the United Nations Mission in the Sudan is providing for the referendum process, as well as President Mkapa for the work of the Secretary-General's Panel. I also thank both of them for their briefings this morning. This has been an impressive United Nations operation.

Although we are concerned about events in Abyei, we are very encouraged by the peaceful and orderly conduct of the voting process in the referendum and by the Panel's assessment that the voting process allowed the people of the Sudan to express their will freely. Both the Intergovernmental

Authority on Development and the African Union called the referendum free, fair and credible. The Southern Sudan Referendum Commission and both Sudanese parties should be highly commended for this successful process. We welcome the timeline that the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission has established for the announcement of the results. It is important that the timeline and the results, when announced, be respected by all parties. We must all work to ensure that the aggregation and counting process takes place in an atmosphere of patience and calm.

We deplore the clashes that took place in Abyei between 7 and 10 January and deeply regret the loss of life. We welcome the efforts of the parties' local leaders and of Special Representative Menkerios to restore calm and secure the local peace agreement reached on 13 January. We urge all parties to continue to work to that end. Such clashes underline the urgent need for reaching a lasting agreement on Abyei. We urge the swift resumption of talks and call on the parties to make the compromises necessary to secure long-term peace and stability.

A similar spirit of compromise will be needed to resolve crucial post-referendum issues, which include the border, citizenship and wealth-sharing. We call on the parties to show leadership in these areas, as they have done on the referendum. The Security Council remains united in its support for a peaceful and credible referendum and for the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

I cannot close without addressing the situation in Darfur, which remains of deep concern. The recent abduction of United Nations Humanitarian Air Service employees in West Darfur highlights the lack of security in Darfur and its impact on humanitarian operations there. We call on all parties to cease hostilities immediately and to ensure full and unhindered access for humanitarian workers and the staff of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur. We continue to support the work of African Union-United Nations Chief Mediator Djibril Bassolé and his efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement in Darfur. Genuine and enduring peace in Darfur will require a comprehensive and inclusive agreement. We therefore call on all rebel groups to join the peace process without delay or preconditions.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): I also want to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Menkerios and President Mkapa for their important briefings today.

This is a historic moment. I join President Obama in congratulating the people and leaders of the Sudan on the successful completion of voting on the referendum on independence. The people of Southern Sudan, after decades of war and more than 2 million killed, have cast their votes peacefully and expressed their will. The promise of self-determination was made to the Southern Sudanese people in 2005. Thanks to the commitment of the people of the Sudan and the support of the international community, that promise was finally fulfilled. Let us not underestimate what this referendum means to the people of Southern Sudan. We have all heard reports of long lines forming overnight on 8 January and of people standing in line for hours to vote. We have even heard of a case in which a river ferry broke down and voters jumped into the presumably crocodile-infested river and swam across to reach the polling station. As President Obama said after the polling closed,

> "The past week has given the world renewed faith in the prospect of a peaceful, prosperous future for all of the Sudanese people — a future that the American people long to see in Sudan."

The United States commends the men and women of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) for their outstanding work. Thanks to their tireless efforts under daunting challenges and difficult circumstances, the people of the Sudan have been able to take a huge step forward on the path towards the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which ended a 23-year civil war.

My Government congratulates Special Representative of the Secretary-General Menkerios, who is performing an incredibly difficult job with grace and wisdom. We thank him.

We also welcome the work that the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission, the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau, the Government of the Sudan and the Government of Southern Sudan have done to ensure that this historic referendum occurred on time and peacefully and reflected the will of the people.

We welcome the 16 January statement from the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the

Sudan, in which it stated that it was satisfied that the referendum process had "allowed the people of Southern Sudan to express their will freely". A number of other observer missions have also already released preliminary statements. On 17 January, the Carter Center called the referendum peaceful and credible and broadly consistent with international standards. The Arab League stated that the process was "in line with international standards". The European Union observer mission commended a "peaceful, credible voting process with overwhelming turnout". On 16 January, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development and the African Union called the referendum "free, fair and credible." We commend the work of the hundreds of international and thousands of domestic observers. The United States continues to urge everyone to respect the results of the referendum.

Of course, we must all focus on the challenging and promising road ahead. We urge the parties to return to the negotiating table as soon as possible to negotiate a rapid and sustainable resolution to the question of Abyei and other outstanding CPA issues. The United States fully supports the efforts of the Chair of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel, President Thabo Mbeki, to facilitate these agreements. We reiterate that any resolution regarding the future of the Abyei area must be reached with the consent of both parties and through a political settlement or a process that respects the rights and needs of those communities traditionally associated with the area.

Along with the status of Abyei, there are other outstanding issues that require urgent attention, such as border demarcation, citizenship, wealth-sharing agreements, natural resource management, the division of the national debt, security arrangements, currency arrangements and international treaties and legal obligations, which are all equally important. We also consider peaceful, inclusive popular consultations in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan states that reflect the will of the people to be essential components of the implementation of the CPA. We call on the parties to bring the same spirit to those negotiations as they have brought to the conduct of the referendum itself.

For all of the inspiring events in the Sudan over the past week, the United States laments the loss of life in Abyei and the border region and reiterates its deep concern regarding the arrest, detention and harassment of human rights activists and journalists by the Government of the Sudan's security forces, which prevented both a Sudan People's Liberation Movement leader and an Umma Party leader from conducting television interviews. In addition, four university students were arrested in separate incidents for trying to host discussions. We urge Council members to join us in calling on the Government of the Sudan to release those who have been imprisoned unjustly, including those jailed for exercising such basic rights as freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

As President Obama has made clear, the United States wants the leaders in the Sudan to choose the path of peace and prosperity for all of the Sudanese people. He has extended the hand of the United States in that spirit. In order for that future to be realized, however, the Sudan, too, must work with the international community. That includes cooperating with UNMIS and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) to facilitate full freedom of access and movement for United Nations peacekeepers and for humanitarian workers.

That access is especially important given the alarming reports that Sudanese armed forces have burned homes and blocked civilians' access to UNAMID in Khor Abeche and that the Government of the Sudan violated the North-South ceasefire with repeated aerial bombardments into the Kiir River valley. That is in addition to the all-too-frequent reports of aerial bombardment in Jebel Marra and the Government of the Sudan's ongoing refusal to grant UNAMID patrols access to affected populations in spite of the status-of-forces agreement.

We are deeply saddened and troubled by the news that on 13 January three Bulgarian helicopter crew members contracted to the World Food Programme were kidnapped in Darfur. We convey our condolences to their families and we urge the Government of the Sudan to do its utmost to facilitate their safe return.

We recall that 40,000 residents of Darfur were displaced from their homes in December alone. Civilians continue to live under the threat of attack and sexual and gender-based violence. It is therefore in all of our interests to continue to work to prevent genocide.

The United States again calls on the Government of the Sudan to immediately halt aerial bombardments. We condemn attacks on civilians in the strongest possible terms. Obtaining a ceasefire between the

Government of the Sudan and the armed movements should be the immediate objective of the peace process. The political process for a Darfur peace agreement must be reinvigorated. All relevant parties must come back to the negotiating table.

As we discussed during consultations on the Sudan on 6 January, the unity shown by the Council has gone a long way towards supporting the parties as they have stayed on the path of peace. We need to continue to watch closely as the parties continue to implement the CPA. As progress is made, we should welcome it and offer continued encouragement. But just as important, we need to be prepared to insist upon and to support the full and final implementation of the CPA on such issues as protection of minorities and rejection of proxy militias and other threats to peace and security in the Sudan.

Mr. Moungara Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Allow me also to thank President Mkapa and Mr. Menkerios for their very detailed briefings on the recent consultative referendum on Southern Sudan.

I would like to comment briefly on the referendum, which took place in a peaceful atmosphere, as well as on the challenges that remain to be addressed and the situation in Darfur.

The referendum held on 9 January marked a decisive turning point in the history of the Sudan. By respecting the timetable set out by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the Sudanese parties once again showed their courage and their capacity to overcome their differences to push forward peace and stability in their country. I would therefore like to pay them a warm tribute. My delegation urges them to show the same restraint until the announcement of the final results and to respect the outcome.

We would also like to congratulate the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission for having ensured the smooth conduct of the ballot. We are also grateful to the various international observers, who made it possible to monitor the ballot and affirmed its fair and democratic nature. Likewise, the support of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), the United Nations Development Programme and other partners deserve to be commended here.

We remain convinced that the same clear-sightedness shown by the Sudanese parties during the referendum will prevail in addressing the no less crucial issues that remain to be settled, in particular border demarcation, citizenship, the sharing of resources, the management of assets and debts, and security provisions. The future of fraternal relations and peaceful coexistence between the North and the South depend on that.

To that end, we are encouraged by the establishment of a framework to guide the talks on those important issues, and we would like to commend the role played by the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel in that regard. Such progress, although minimal, merits support. The international community should encourage the parties to continue their efforts and to make the necessary concessions in order to reach a final agreement.

Moreover, we urge the parties to take courageous decisions in order to find an agreement on the issue of Abyei. The clashes that occurred during the voting show the volatility of the situation in that region. They also require the strengthening of UNMIS in the most sensitive areas of the border between the North and the South.

The success of the referendum in the Southern Sudan should not conceal the precarious nature of the situation in Darfur and its impact on civilian populations and humanitarian workers. Here too, the mobilization of the international community is important. We must keep the pressure on all parties and support the peace process, which is having difficulty in moving forward.

We welcome the joint efforts of Joint Chief Mediator Djibril Bassolé and Qatar that have made it possible to establish committees for talks between Khartoum and the Liberation and Justice Movement on issues such as power-sharing, wealth and security.

We reiterate our support for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). We also call on the Sudanese authorities to lift the restrictions imposed on UNAMID and humanitarian workers in order to allow them access to the needy populations in Darfur. Gabon hopes to see the Doha talks end in an inclusive peaceful agreement.

To conclude, my delegation would like to encourage the international community to invest in the economic development of the Southern Sudan in order to guarantee lasting peace and security, whatever the outcome of the referendum.

Finally, my delegation will support the draft presidential statement to be adopted at the end of our discussions.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): My delegation joins others in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Haile Menkerios, and President Mkapa, Chair of the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan, for their respective valuable briefings to the Council.

South Africa welcomes the convening of this important meeting, and we wish to focus our intervention on the following three pertinent issues: the referendum process and post-referendum issues, the need for continued political leadership and engagement, and the need to address the situation in Darfur.

South Africa followed the referendum process very closely, with the participation of 35 South Africans in the 110-member African Union (AU) observer mission. We pay tribute to the sterling work done by the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission and the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau in executing what many have described as a historic and momentous achievement in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

We note that, between 9 and 15 January, the citizens of Southern Sudan, located in the South and the North and spread across the globe in eight countries, exercised their right to vote and to determine their future during the referendum on self-determination. The registration of more than 3.9 million voters and a voter turnout of more than 80 per cent are testament to the resolve and determination of the Southern Sudanese to exercise their right to vote and of their faith in the referendum process.

We commend the role of the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission, which, in four months, achieved such astonishing success, and of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan and the international community, which provided support for the process. My delegation joins previous speakers in saluting the millions of people who participated in the voting process for achieving this important milestone.

Instructive in that regard are the preliminary statements of the African Union observer mission on the Southern Sudan referendum, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and the Chair of the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan, who is here today, that the referendum process was free, fair and credible and that it was conducted in accordance with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Referendum Act.

We believe that it is vital that the peace and calm that characterized the referendum process be maintained as we await the outcome of the referendum. The observance of the rule of law is critical; in that regard, all aspects of the referendum must be conducted in compliance with the legislative framework set out in the Referendum Act, and all timelines respected.

On the need for continued political leadership and cooperation, South Africa commends the personal leadership and courage shown by President Al-Bashir and First Vice-President Salva Kiir Mayardit, in particular on facilitating a conducive and peaceful environment in which citizens were able to participate freely and without fear in casting their ballot. My delegation also welcomes the commitment of the parties to respecting the outcome of the results.

We are impressed by the call made by First Vice-President Salva Kiir for forgiveness and reconciliation, and for his security forces to protect the citizens of the North and their property in the South. That is demonstrative of the political will and desire to secure a peaceful future for all the people of the Sudan and echoes similar sentiments for coexistence and cooperation previously expressed by President Al-Bashir. My delegation believes that the desire for cooperation and to secure peaceful post-referendum relations augurs well for peace and stability between the North and the South.

We call on all the parties in the Sudan to continue and maintain their close cooperation, whatever the outcome of the referendum may be. However, the successful holding of the referendum is not an end in itself, but represents a critical step in an onward journey to sustainable peace, stability and development. The international community should therefore continue to focus on the many challenges still confronting the Sudan.

In that regard, we are convinced that the work of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel on the Sudan, chaired by former President Mbeki, continues to play an important facilitation role in finding mutually agreed outcomes to the post-referendum issues, such as

external debt, citizenship and border security arrangements. We encourage the parties to continue their cooperation with the Panel, and to invoke the same political will and level of commitment in guiding them towards agreement on the remaining issues.

As the violent and deadly events in Abyei last week clearly demonstrated, sustainable peace will require the continued commitment of the parties, as well as full implementation of the existing agreements. My delegation welcomes the agreement reached between the communities that brought an end to the hostilities and violence. We regret the loss of life suffered during the clashes. Those events again underscore the urgency and importance of concluding the political negotiation on Abyei, as facilitated by the AU Panel. My delegation remains convinced that such challenges are not insurmountable. It remains confident that such issues can be resolved with the continued support of the international community, as well as the necessary political will of the parties.

With regard to Darfur, the deteriorating security situation resulting from the clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)-Minni Minawi and the Justice and Equality Movement has led to the displacement of more than 40,000 people. We call on all the parties to cease hostilities and for the SLA-Minni Minawi to recommit to a comprehensive ceasefire agreement.

My delegation is deeply concerned about the lack of progress in the Doha negotiations, and we urge parties to redouble their efforts to find a peaceful and comprehensive solution to the conflict in Darfur. We encourage the Government of the Sudan, the Justice and Equality Movement and the Liberation and Justice Movement to give consideration to the proposals presented by the mediation as a basis for seeking compromise and agreement to conclude these peace processes. We also encourage the launching of the inclusive political process, in the form of a Darfur-Darfur conference and with the objective of reaching a global political agreement, as soon as conditions allow.

Durable peace and development are brought about by cooperation rather than confrontation and by ballots rather than bullets. It is important that the parties in Darfur be inspired by the progress made in the North-South conflict and collectively seek a peaceful and negotiated solution to the conflict in Darfur. The international community should stand ready to assist the people of the Sudan in finding a lasting solution to that conflict.

In conclusion, I wish to commend the United Nations Mission in the Sudan; Special Representative Menkerios; the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan, led by former President Mr. Benjamin Mkapa; the African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur, chaired by former President Mr. Thabo Mbeki; and the Joint African Union-United Nations Chief Mediator for Darfur, Mr. Djibrill Bassolé, for their continued and tireless commitment to bringing peace and stability to the Sudan.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): Like others, I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, Mr. Haile Menkerios, and President Mkapa for their comprehensive briefings and for the very significant work they have undertaken thus far. We are encouraged by their analysis and evaluation of the problems that still lie ahead.

Portugal welcomes the conclusion of the generally peaceful and orderly polling process for the referendum on the self-determination of Southern Sudan, consistent with international standards, and congratulates the Sudanese people on their patience and peaceful determination to cast their ballots in an orderly fashion. We also congratulate the leaders of the Sudan on their historic accomplishment. This was indeed a milestone, in terms not only of the implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), but also of underlining the Sudanese people's attachment to the democratic process.

Let me also commend the work of the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission in Khartoum and in Juba for its efforts to make the referendum happen, despite serious time constraints and numerous challenges. Portugal also commends the two parties to the CPA for maintaining the political commitment required to ensure that the peace process moves forward.

Portugal would like to voice appreciation for the support provided by the United Nations Mission in the Sudan, and for the work of the observer groups, including the very significant European Union election observation mission, which travelled throughout the Sudan to assess the situation. We also extend a word of gratitude and appreciation to the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan for its work.

The process is not finished, however. The transmission of results from nearly 3,000 referendum centres has only just begun. We call on the people and the parties of the Sudan to exercise the necessary restraint until the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission announces the final result of the referendum, for which timelines have already been set. We believe it essential that, during this period, all citizens be kept well-informed of progress made towards the final results. We call on all the parties to respect the outcome of the referendum, which translates the expression of the free will of the people, and to refrain from any unilateral action.

While the Sudan awaits the provisional and final results, the protection of the fundamental rights of all Sudanese citizens is paramount. We therefore urge the parties to the CPA to reassure people of all nationalities in the Sudan, including Southerners in the North and Northerners in the South, that their rights, safety and property will continue to be respected.

Despite the remarkable operational and political achievement that the referendum represents, the work of completing the implementation of the CPA is not over. It will require persistent, patient and methodical negotiation by both parties and a spirit of compromise and cooperation. We are encouraged by the public commitments made by President Al-Bashir and first Vice-President Salva Kiir to continuing negotiations on outstanding CPA issues once the results have been announced.

In that context, it is of the utmost importance that the parties reach an agreement on Abyei, the absence of which is responsible for ongoing instability and acts of violence that we strongly deplore. Along with the future of the Abyei region, my delegation also recalls the need for timely and transparent popular consultations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states.

Unfortunately, the peaceful climate of the referendum cannot be extended to Darfur. We remain deeply concerned by the increase in violence and insecurity in Darfur. We condemn the kidnapping on 13 January of three members of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service and urge their immediate release. Portugal calls on the parties to cease hostilities immediately, to ensure full and unhindered access for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur throughout the mission area, and to allow humanitarian workers to provide assistance to all populations in need.

My delegation continues to underscore the need for a political resolution to the crisis and urge all groups to join and actively engage in the peace process without further delay or preconditions.

In conclusion, over the past two weeks, the Sudanese authorities conducted the referendum on self-determination for Southern Sudan, as envisaged in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended 22 years of civil war. The calm and orderly environment in which it took place gives us renewed faith in a peaceful and prosperous future for all Sudanese. To achieve that goal, we need the continuing engagement of all parties, including international and bilateral partners. It is of fundamental importance that the international community continue to support both the North and the South, regardless of the referendum outcome. Portugal stands ready to play its part.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): Allow me to join previous speakers in expressing Brazil's appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, Mr. Haile Menkerios, and President Benjamin Mkapa for their briefings today.

My delegation is very pleased that the Southern Sudan referendum was carried out peacefully and in a transparent manner. The announcement by the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission that the 60 per cent threshold had been achieved, thus making the referendum legally valid, is also encouraging. Brazil welcomes the indications that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement parties acknowledge that the voting process was fair and their assurances that they will accept and implement the results. We welcome the work of the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan and its conclusion that the polling allowed the Sudanese people to freely express their will.

Brazil has sent a team of observers to the Sudan. They have reported that the voting proceeded well and that the Sudanese people showed enthusiasm, commitment, patience and determination. We therefore salute, first and foremost, the Sudanese people for this important achievement. Their leaders, as well as the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission and its Bureau, deserve our appreciation for their outstanding work. We are also grateful for the support provided by the United Nations. We commend Mr. Haile Menkerios for his dedication and skilful work, and thank President

Mkapa and the members of the Panel for their invaluable contribution.

Our collective att[illegible]tion now turns to the process of counting the votes, which we hope will proceed in a manner as orderly and effective as the registration and voting, in an environment of calm and transparency. In this phase as in the previous ones, the parties will have a special responsibility to maintain public tranquillity and ensure that the electoral process moves forward as planned.

Nowhere is calm needed more right now than in Abyei. We deeply regret the clashes that took place in Abyei between 7 and 9 January. We welcome the fact that Abyei communities have worked together to ease tensions. We appreciate the efforts made by the United Nations Mission in the Sudan and the Sudanese authorities to contain hostilities and avoid escalation.

As we know, resolving the question of Abyei is critical to sustainable peace in the Sudan. Therefore, no effort should be spared to address the issue effectively and definitively as soon as possible. Holding popular consultations in the Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states is also imperative.

Given the key role played by the United Nations in Sudan, we reiterate our call on all Sudanese parties to fully respect and cooperate with the Organization, in particular its representatives on the ground. In this regard, we condemn in the strongest terms the recent kidnapping of three United Nations Humanitarian Air Service staff members.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Mr. Menkerios, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and head of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), and Mr. Mkapa, Chair of the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan, for their briefings.

The referendum in Southern Sudan has been completed smoothly with the joint efforts made by the North, the South and the international community. This is an important step towards the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which China welcomes. China also welcomes the contributions made by such regional organizations as the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union Mission in the Sudan and the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan. We thank them for their efforts, which contributed to the smooth holding of the referendum.

The referendum in Southern Sudan is not an end in itself. The ultimate goal of implementing the CPA remains that of attaining sustainable peace, stability and development in the Sudan. Regardless of the outcome of the referendum, it is imperative to ensure long-term peace and stability in the Sudan and the wider region. We hope that the North and the South will continue to engage in dialogue and consultations in order to reach an early agreement on such issues as Abyei, wealth-sharing and border demarcation so as to further promote the North-South peace process.

China donated $500,000 to assist the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission in the holding the referendum. We also provided the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau with support in kind and sent a team of observers to the Sudan. We are ready to work with the international community and the parties concerned and to continue to play an active and constructive role in promoting the long-term peace, stability and development of the Sudan.

China supports a peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the Darfur issue, in particular by addressing the root causes of the conflict. At present, the security situation in Darfur is very fragile and the humanitarian situation is facing a number of difficulties. The root cause is the lack of a strong and widely supported political agreement in Darfur. China therefore calls on the Security Council and the international community to strengthen their support to the political process in Darfur and to urge the rebel groups there to join the peace talks without conditions or delay. We also support the continued efforts of UNMIS to promote the political process in Darfur in accordance with resolution 1935 (2010).

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): I would like to join other colleagues in thanking President Benjamin Mkapa, Chair of the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan, and Mr. Menkerios, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, for their informative briefings and, more important, for the commendable work they have been doing.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that the referendum in Southern Sudan was completed successfully and peacefully over a one-week period. A

very large number of eligible voters are reported to have cast their ballots. By all accounts, the turnover was well above the required threshold. The Southern Sudan Referendum Commission and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), as well as other international and regional organizations that partnered with the South Sudanese authorities, deserve our highest appreciation for the conduct of the referendum. That it was conducted peacefully and without violence is all the more remarkable.

The successful conduct of the referendum was an important element in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement reached between the Sudanese parties. The commitment of these parties, expressed at the highest levels, to respecting the outcome of the referendum is equally praiseworthy. We commend this commitment and hope that the same spirit of cooperation and commitment will be shown by the parties to resolve the post-referendum issues that remain to be agreed upon.

While the referendum was held without violence, we witnessed during the course of the week a high and worrying level of violence in the Abyei region, which led to the loss of lives. This is cause for concern. We urge the leaders of the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities to show restraint and faithfully implement the agreement mediated by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We commend Ambassador Menkerios and UNMIS for their role in facilitating this agreement.

The violence witnessed last week in Abyei should remind us of the need to remain vigilant with regard to the situation on the ground, which remains fragile. We hope that the parties will cease their support for proxy forces and seek to resolve all issues through negotiation and dialogue.

The situation in Darfur also remains cause for concern. The problem there requires dialogue with the participation of all groups — not only those armed groups but civil society at large. We therefore urge all parties to return to the negotiating table and reach an agreement expeditiously.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The self-determination referendum in Southern Sudan marks the culmination of the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) by the Sudanese parties. Russian representatives were involved in monitoring the referendum; according to them, the polling took place in a generally calm and free environment, and no serious breaches of electoral procedures were noted. Given the participation rate of approximately 80 per cent of registered voters, the people were indeed able to express their will freely.

Similar assessments were made by a range of other international observers, including the United Nations Secretary-General's Panel led by Mr. Mkapa. We note the significant work carried out by the United Nations and Special Representative Menkerios in preparation for the voting in the Sudan.

Russia was actively involved in international efforts to ensure the timely and peaceful holding of the referendum. This issue was one of the main topics addressed during a recent telephone conversation between President Medvedev of Russia and President Al-Bashir of the Sudan, as well as during the visit of the Sudanese Foreign Minister to Moscow and the talks with the special representative of the Russian President on the Sudan.

We now await the objective evaluation of the outcome of the referendum. During this time, all Sudanese parties and Sudan's partners must refrain from drawing hasty conclusions and making declarations. We believe that the leaders of both the North and the South will unswervingly uphold their commitments to accepting any result as the expression of the will of the population of the South.

In the coming six-month transition period, there is a need to settle the main points of contention between the Sudanese parties, such as the status of Abyei, border demarcation, the distribution of oil revenues, issues of citizenship and external debt. In this context, we are particularly concerned by the failure to settle the situation in the Abyei border region where armed clashes led to fatalities during the referendum. The parties to the CPA must ensure that there are no clashes during the transition period. There is undoubtedly a need for further active support for the efforts of the parties in this regard.

Thus, the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which is the basis for a settlement in the Sudan, is entering its final phase. The full implementation of the CPA remains crucial to both the governance in the Sudan and to peace and stability in the subregion. Whatever the results of the referendum, a new chapter is beginning in the political development

of this country. We trust that this phase will see the aims of post-conflict recovery and social and economic progress met, and ensure the democratic rights and interests of Sudanese citizens.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haile Menkerios for his outstanding work heading the United Nations Mission in the Sudan. I would also like to thank President Mkapa for his briefing and his assessment of the process.

What has been reported to us here today about the Sudan is good news. The self-determination referendum began on the scheduled date and proceeded under transparent and credible conditions. France commends all participants who made it possible for this important stage of the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement to take place, beginning with the authorities in Khartoum and Juba, who embarked on a constructive path of partnership rather than confrontation. We also commend the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan, which organized the voting under very difficult conditions, and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan, which provided logistical and technical support critical to organizing the referendum in the largest country in Africa. Lastly and most importantly, we commend the people of the Sudan, whose peaceful participation, according to the latest reports, far exceeded the 60 per cent quorum required to validate the voting.

The parties, however, still have much to do to by the end of the interim period provided for in the Agreement. First, a solution must be found in Abyei. Like previous speakers, we are concerned by the violence that has occurred there. An agreement appears to have been reached by the parties, but a lasting solution must be outlined regarding the status of the province and the coexistence of the ethnic groups there. Moreover, post-referendum issues left pending must be settled. The future of the relationship between the North and the South depends on a shared understanding of the placement of the border, security matters, citizenship and the sharing of wealth.

Regarding Abyei, as with other post-referendum matters, we support the facilitation work conducted by the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel headed by President Mbeki. We encourage the parties to spare no effort and to make the concessions necessary to a lasting peace.

While we welcome the successful conduct of the referendum, we cannot fail to note the deterioration of the situation in Darfur. What is taking place is not a case of sporadic attacks; it is a war between the Sudanese Armed Forces and rebel groups that is also being waged against civilians, sowing death and creating tens of thousands of newly displaced persons. We are also very concerned about the Bulgarian pilots abducted on 13 January.

Given the current instability, what is needed is for the Sudanese Armed Forces and the rebel groups to achieve a genuine ceasefire and sustainable peace. To that end, peace talks must take place between the combatants. The only framework for such negotiations that exists today is the Doha talks, conducted by Joint Chief Mediator Djibrill Bassolé with the support of the Government of Qatar. This framework is open to improvement. New incentives must be found to bring the Sudanese Government and all rebel groups back to the table. We must nurture this tool because it is today the only means of bringing those warring parties together.

We continue to lend our full support to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and strongly condemn the obstacles placed in its way. It must redouble its efforts to protect civilians, as required by its mandate. We believe that progress is possible.

I would like to conclude by saying that there can be no peace without justice in Darfur, in keeping with the implementation of resolution 1593 (2005).

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to express my appreciation to Mr. Mkapa for his briefing. I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, Mr. Menkerios, for his valuable preliminary remarks.

We would like to express our satisfaction with the peaceful and impartial conduct of the referendum in Southern Sudan, which has allowed the people to exercise their right to self-determination in a free and democratic manner. Such impartial and peaceful circumstances are a clear result of the implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the efforts of the United Nations, the African Union and the League of Arab States. We further recall that the pledge by the Sudanese President to accept the results of the referendum is cause for optimism and a step in the right direction in the post-referendum

period. We stress the importance of the bonds linking the North and the South and of coexistence and cooperation between them, irrespective of the results of the referendum, including cooperation within a new political framework in the service of their mutual interests.

We also stress the importance of following up on such pending matters as the situation in Abyei and post-referendum issues, including citizenship, wealth-sharing, oil and water revenues, debt and others. On the subject of Abyei, we commend the role of Mr. Menkerios and the parties to the CPA, as well as the local leadership, in containing the recent clashes. We call on those parties and local leaders to resume their efforts to reach an agreement on Abyei.

We also welcome the efforts of the State of Qatar to reach a peace agreement in Darfur, in parallel with the new strategy of the Sudanese Government in this matter, and we stress that such an agreement would have positive consequences for the overall situation in the Sudan.

In conclusion, we praise the work of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): This is the first time that Germany is taking the floor in the Council as one of the new non-permanent members. Allow me to express my country's determination to assume the responsibility associated with membership in the Security Council. Germany will contribute to the work of the Security Council in the interest of the United Nations as a whole.

Like others, I would like to express our gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, Mr. Haile Menkerios, and to President Benjamin Mkapa for their informed and encouraging briefings.

Germany welcomes the peaceful voting during the referendum and joins others in congratulating the parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the people of the Sudan. Germany also extends its gratitude to the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission in Khartoum and the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau in Juba. Without their tireless efforts and careful preparations, this success would not have been possible. Germany is also grateful for the invaluable contribution of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan under the leadership of Special Representative Menkerios. We commend all domestic and international monitoring teams that followed the process closely.

My country took part in the observer mission of the European Union, and Germany also supported voter education, continues to support the Southern Sudan Police Service and is engaging in intense political dialogue with the parties. We are happy to have been able to contribute to the success of the referendum process.

All parties in the Sudan now need to continue to cooperate in good faith in the resolution of their differences. Multiple and serious challenges remain. The violence in Abyei during the first days of the referendum demonstrated that a swift and durable solution of the question of Abyei was of the utmost importance. We urge all parties in the area to refrain from using violence and to seek peaceful solutions to their conflicts. We urgently call upon the parties to the CPA to reach an agreement on Abyei as well as on other remaining CPA and post-referendum issues, such as citizenship, the rights of Northerners in the South and of Southerners in the North, wealth sharing, border demarcation and security arrangements. All these issues have the potential to undo the progress realized so far.

We therefore suggest that the Sudan Consultative Forum, under the joint chairmanship of Thabo Mbeki as Head of the African Union High Level Implementation Panel on the Sudan and the United Nations, meet at the earliest convenience to address those questions.

The parties and the Security Council also need to look beyond the CPA and be prepared to act swiftly to address the challenges ahead and prevent future conflict. In any event, the Security Council and the international community will have to continue to extend their support to institution-building in South Sudan.

Furthermore, we must not lose sight of the developments in the Northern part of the Sudan. It is in the interest of regional stability to provide a perspective there, including an economic perspective to master the upcoming challenges. Debt relief, free trade and economic and development cooperation in the North and the South are necessary to open a path towards a peaceful and prosperous future.

The positive news on the referendum must not divert our attention from the situation in Darfur. We are very concerned about the continuing violence in that region and about the displacement of thousands of people. The situation of children in particular should be one of our primary concerns. We call upon all parties to the conflict to fully respect the humanitarian principles, including humanitarian access.

We are especially concerned about the abduction by an unidentified armed group of three Bulgarian members of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service in Darfur. We demand their immediate release.

We also repeat that those responsible for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole committed in Darfur must be brought to justice. In that context, we recall resolution 1593 (2005).

We support the Doha peace talks and call upon all parties to participate in the peace process hosted by the Government of Qatar, as well as to cooperate with Joint African Union-United Nations Mediator Bassolé. We expect all parties to carefully study the proposals elaborated by the mediation in Qatar and we urge all parties to the conflict in Darfur to continue negotiations and to conclude a ceasefire agreement immediately and without preconditions.

We repeat our calls to ensure full and unhindered access for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) throughout the mission area. While we support all efforts by UNAMID, particular attention must be paid to the mission's core mandate, namely, the protection of civilians and humanitarian access.

For several years now, the Security Council has assumed responsibility for the situation in the Sudan and the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which led to the Southern Sudan referendum. The determination and the unity of the Council have been key to the negotiations and the preparations that preceded the referendum. The parties to the CPA were always able to count on the support of the Council. At the same time, what the Council expected from the parties in the Sudan was very clear. By holding this meeting today, three days after the conclusion of the polling, the Security Council again sends a strong message of concern and responsibility to the parties and people in the Sudan.

The referendum in the Sudan shows what the Council can achieve for the maintenance of international peace and security if it acts in a timely and united manner that includes clear messages. We all know that huge challenges remain for peace and stability in the Sudan. Germany is ready to contribute to the work of the Security Council towards a peaceful and prosperous future for the Sudan.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): My first words must be to congratulate President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir, First Vice-President Salva Kiir and others leaders of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) for steadfastly steering the tortuous process that led to the recently concluded referendum in Southern Sudan. I should also thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haile Menkerios and President Benjamin Mkapa, Chair of the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan, for their comprehensive briefings today.

To say that the referendum represents a significant milestone for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement would be a gross understatement. Regardless of its outcome, the fact that it was conducted without rancor has opened up a new vista for the Sudan, the subregion and Africa as a whole. Nigeria sent a team of observers that joined its counterparts from other countries and organizations, including the United Nations, to witness the conduct of this historic exercise. We are satisfied with the reports, and particularly gratified, that the vote took place in a relatively peaceful, orderly and transparent atmosphere in spite of initial uncertainties and apprehension. By living up to their obligations, the parties to the CPA — the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the National Congress Party — have contributed significantly to this landmark achievement. We therefore commend them, as well as the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission and the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau, for overcoming the daunting challenges of conducting a credible vote. We also commend the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) for providing the technical and logistical support that greatly facilitated the vote.

In that regard, I want to note the complaint of Mr. Menkerios regarding the freedom of movement of UNMIS, as we often do with regard to that of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). May I also acknowledge that, through the appointment of President Mkapa and his team, the United Nations has enhanced its role in the referendum process.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge the critical role that the Security Council has played, not only through its mission to the Sudan but also by remaining united and keeping the subject high on its agenda.

As we await the final result of the voting, we call on the parties not only to remain calm but especially to continue to respect their obligations and refrain from any acts capable of undermining the process. Nigeria is pleased that the parties have unequivocally restated their commitment to accept the outcome of the referendum in good faith. It is our hope that the successful conclusion of the referendum will help to promote very positive post-referendum relations between the North and the South.

Both parties should draw the inspiration to work tirelessly between now and July — the interim period — to complete the key outstanding tasks under the CPA. More especially, they should spare no efforts in reaching workable compromises on the Abyei question, the North-South border, popular consultations in the states of Blue Nile and South Kordofan and security arrangements between the North and the South. Mutually satisfactory agreement is also required on the issues of citizenship, oil, water resources, assets and liabilities, currency and economic cooperation.

We commend the African Union's High-Level Implementation Panel on the Sudan, led by President Thabo Mbeki, for facilitating the negotiations towards a framework agreement between the parties. The Panel's role in fostering a stable relationship between the North and the South in the long run cannot be overemphasized. We therefore urge the Panel to intensify its efforts in the interim period.

The Council and the international community should not be lulled into ignoring the enormity of the challenges that still exist in Southern Sudan by the euphoria of the referendum. While attaining independence is an inalienable aspiration, the real business of State-building will become even more acute in the South with rising expectations of economic, political and social transformation. Adequate attention must therefore be given to managing people's great expectations through good governance and the sound management of scarce resources and opportunities. Nigeria recognizes that Southern Sudanese leaders cannot achieve these things acting alone. Now more than ever, the Council and the international community must stand in solidarity with Southern Sudan. Indeed, our solidarity will be put to the test in the type of assistance that we give to Southern Sudan.

More than ever, greater political engagement between the North and the South and increased external assistance and pressure will be required to solve their outstanding issues. The Council's role will be more meaningful if it remains as united, resolute and committed as it has been in the past. We urge the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, neighbouring countries and bilateral partners to also remain engaged. We do hope that the forthcoming high-level meeting on the Sudan on the margins of the AU Summit in Addis Ababa will reinforce the message of peace, solidarity and stability in the Sudan and in the region.

On Darfur, Nigeria remains gravely concerned about the increase in violence and insecurity and condemns in the strongest terms the kidnapping of three members of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service. We commend the work of UNAMID under Ibrahim Gambari. We regret that a comprehensive peace agreement has yet to be finalized, despite the concerted and rigorous efforts of Djibrill Bassolé, the Joint Chief Negotiator. We call for the cessation of hostilities and the immediate release of the three members of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service. We reiterate our call on the Government of the Sudan, the Justice and Equality Movement and other factions to resume the Doha talks without preconditions. We have an obligation to ensure that the Doha process does not lose credibility.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by expressing my personal pleasure and that of Colombia in taking the floor for the first time as a non-permanent member of this Council. We do so in celebration of an historic event, which is the outcome of a process emanating from a peace agreement that will have great repercussions for the people of the Sudan and the continent of Africa. I endorse the thanks expressed to Mssrs. Menkerios and Mkapa for their briefings, which clearly described the evolution of recent events in the Sudan.

Indeed, with the conclusion of the polling process in the Southern Sudan referendum, a major step was taken towards achieving a peace that we hope will be stable and durable and calls for the full implementation of the provisions of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace

Agreement (CPA). Although the process was not free of incident, as many previous speakers have recognized, it is to be noted that the polling took place in a generally peaceful climate and with broad participation. We trust that the ballot count and the posting of final results will be undertaken smoothly and without incidents that would jeopardize the peaceful conclusion of the process.

We congratulate the people of the Sudan, the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission, the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan, the United Nations Mission in the Sudan and electoral observers for their work and the results achieved so far. Independently of the outcome of the referendum, and with the objective of achieving a peaceful and mutually beneficial relationship between the parties, it is essential to find lasting solutions to all pending economic, political and social issues.

To that end, Colombia supports the work undertaken by the African Union High-Level Panel on the Sudan, successfully headed by President Mbeki. We urge the parties to cooperate effectively in seeking concrete outcomes that will make it possible to identify the framework governing relations between North and South upon the conclusion of the interim period provided for in the Peace Agreement.

We should now reflect on the support to be provided by the Security Council to the implementation of post-CPA commitments. We would like to reiterate and share the general opinion of members of the Council regarding the worrisome situation in Abyei. The potential for conflict will persist so long as agreements are not reached on the status and administration of the area. Similarly, we believe that, in line with commitments contained in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the popular consultations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states should be held in a free, timely and transparent manner.

Finally, we restate our support for the peace process in Darfur led by the African Union and the United Nations and urge all rebel movements to join this process immediately and unconditionally.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I thank Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, Chair of the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan, and Mr. Haile Menkerios, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, for their briefings. We are encouraged by the smooth completion of the voting process and the assurances of the parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that they will respect the result of the Southern Sudan referendum. Furthermore, in the sensitive time following the end of the voting, it is vital that the parties ensure a peaceful and credible conclusion to the referendum process. It is also important to remind all stakeholders that only the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission is authorized to declare the final results of the referendum.

We commend the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan for its efforts to monitor and assess the referendum process. Its presence and that of international observers have been indispensable in ensuring the credibility of the referendum process.

We take positive note of the parties' decision to continue negotiations on outstanding issues after the conclusion of the referendum process. We urge them to redouble their efforts to reach agreement on these issues, including wealth-sharing, the management of assets and debts, citizenship and voter security arrangements, before the end of the interim period in July 2011.

We welcome the efforts of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel in facilitating negotiations between the parties. As an important part of the CPA, a solution has to be found with regard to Abyei in the coming period.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is of the view that now is the right time for the international community and the United Nations to anticipate their future engagement in the Sudan. Special attention should be given to economic development and extensive cooperation between the North and the South as a crucial part of long-term stability in the region.

As for the situation in Abyei, we are concerned about the recent violence there. It is important that the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) continue to closely monitor the situation in Abyei and that it remain careful to prevent the deterioration of the security situation there. We welcome the activities of UNMIS designed to increase its presence in Abyei. We also welcome the increased presence of UNMIS at hot spots in order to prevent a possible worsening of the security situation.

With regard to restrictions on UNMIS freedom of movement, we call upon the Sudanese authorities to ensure such freedom of movement. We commend the efforts of UNMIS to boost activities related to its protection mandate. It is of the utmost importance that all parties cooperate fully with UNMIS with respect to the protection of civilians.

We are concerned by the recent upsurge of violence in Darfur. We call upon all parties to cease hostilities and to ensure freedom of movement and access for UNMIS and humanitarian workers to the affected areas and populations in need.

We reiterate our full support for the United Nations- and African Union-led peace process in Doha and the mediation efforts of Joint Chief Mediator Bassolé. It is imperative that all parties seize the opportunity offered by the Doha peace talks, and we urge them to join the process without preconditions or further delay.

Finally, we underline that it is of the utmost importance that the United Nations and the international community continue to deliver humanitarian assistance, monitor the humanitarian situation on the ground, and respond duly to any humanitarian crises that may arise.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Osman (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to extend my greetings and thanks to Mr. Haile Menkerios and President Benjamin Mkapa for their briefings on the voting in the referendum in Southern Sudan. They have done a praiseworthy job and are both brilliant sons of Africa. We offer them our appreciation and gratitude.

We listened to their affirmations that the voting process was free, fair and transparent, highlighting the extensive cooperation between the two parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and reflecting the wisdom and commitment of the Sudanese leadership to its undertakings, which were apparent during voter registration and the voting process itself. We in the Sudan and Africa as a whole can be proud of the fact that we established a model of civility that can be used as a guide to others.

As regards the outcome of the referendum, I should like to emphasize the spirit and letter of the statement made by President of the Republic Omer Hassan Al-Bashir on his visit to Juba, the capital of Southern Sudan. He stressed his full commitment to respecting the outcome of the referendum and went even further in expressing his willingness to offer all possible assistance to Southern Sudan in building its own State in case of secession. I reiterate here in this Chamber the full commitment of the Government of the Sudan to respecting the results of the referendum.

We look forward to enjoying the international community's assistance to both parts of the Sudan if secession should take place. The most important contribution the international community can make to Southern and Northern Sudan alike is to cancel the debts burdening the country and constraining its economic rebirth. In that way, the United Nations can do us a true favour and make a positive, praiseworthy gesture that will promote peacebuilding in the Sudan.

As regards the voting and its outcome, I wish now to share some of my thoughts about Abyei. Many speakers have referred to the clashes that took place in Abyei at the time of the voting, but it is important for me to make clear that these clashes were between members of the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka tribes; they were not between the armed forces of the Sudan and members of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). That, too, is a demonstration of the wisdom of both parties in respecting their agreements.

There is, however, a lesson to be learned here, and I hope for the Council's undivided attention in describing it. We have often warned of the dangers of clashes between members of the two tribes, and noted that, unless an acceptable, positive and practical solution that accommodates the facts on the ground in Abyei can be found, there will be no peace. If there should be war, it will be started by members of the two tribes, and not by the SPLA or the Government of the North. I therefore commend the calls on both communities, made in every statement I have heard today, to avoid taking any unilateral decision concerning the special situation in Abyei. In that regard, I appeal to the Council to assist the two parties to the Agreement in finding an acceptable solution so as to ensure the sustainability of peace in both the South and the North.

I should also like to share some of my thoughts about Darfur. Before I do, however, I wish to commend and offer my deep gratitude for the efforts of the United Nations, through its mission in Darfur, led by Mr. Alain Le Roy, and of the Secretary-General to promote the peace process and to find a sustainable solution to the situation in Darfur.

I also wish to say frankly that we in the Sudan often hear expressions of concern and denunciation here in the Security Council regarding events in Darfur, but see little action to help the Sudan to find a lasting solution to the conflict there. We look forward to such action. The Council has the ability to persuade the insurgent movements to come to the negotiating table. The Government of the Sudan has affirmed its resolve, interest in and commitment to a stable and sustainable settlement in Darfur through negotiations. Why does the international community delay in prevailing upon those who are reluctant to come to the negotiating table, thereby squandering billions of sorely needed dollars that the United Nations could direct elsewhere? Instead, approximately $3 billion are spent every year on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur. Greater political effort and more pressure are needed to encourage the insurgent movements to come to the negotiating table under United Nations and African Union auspices. The parties cannot be forced to accept a solution that is not satisfactory to them. We are willing to engage in a process of give and take until an acceptable solution can be arrived at. Merely addressing the symptoms of the conflict in Darfur would be in vain. I know that the Council is sincere in its desire to achieve peace and security throughout the world, and I appeal to it to help us to address the root causes of the conflict.

In this regard, I would like to share with the Council the fact that the Government, in its commitment to addressing the problem, has also adopted a comprehensive strategy for settling the conflict in Darfur. The strategy will be implemented simultaneously with the Doha negotiation forum.

Some may ask what the strategy is, so I will review some of its features. It seeks to include all parties in Darfur in the peace process, especially in the light of the general elections held there, as a result of which provincial parliaments have been constituted in Darfur's three states. It has thus become reasonable and conceivable for the democratically elected parliamentarians to participate in the peace process, particularly since the insurgent factions are numerous and their members do not represent all the people of Darfur. We do not want to rule them out, however, and we do not believe in a policy of rooting them out. By the same token, however, we want the peace process to include all those who were elected democratically, as well as members of armed movements, members of civil society and tribal leaders. The rationale for that is to ensure sustainable peace in Darfur. Peace in the Sudan is integral to peace in the region and in Africa in general.

In conclusion, I would like to inform the Council that we in the Sudan wish to proceed with constructive relations with the United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular, as one of its most important organs. We extend our hand to the Council in cooperation, and ask to be judged by our actions. We do not wish to remain a captive of the past.

The President: There are no further speakers on my list. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.